

Proposed Clear and Simple Language Manual for the Citizens

Product No. 30

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the beginning of the century, countries around the world have initiated steps to ensure that lawyers representing the public and public institutions communicate more clearly and simply with the citizens they serve. Depending on the country, (and following examples from Mexico, Spain and Argentina), the issue centers around how lawyers in public institutions communicate.

In today's world, the legal profession has traditionally been associated with good speech and writing quality; however, it is necessary to recognize that different skills to those required by law are required to transmit an idea briefly and clearly, either orally or in writing.

The present *clear and simple language judicial manual for the citizens* is designed to be used as a work tool to train every judge and judicial assistant who seriously decides to communicate each time better with the citizen, as user of the justice service. The manual is concentrated in the documents written by the judges and their assistants in the judicial process.

There is no doubt that what happens during judicial process has a direct impact on the citizens' life. The solemnity that a process may require or the presence of a lawyer should not distract the Judiciary from the fact that the conflict being resolved comes from the routine circumstances of everyday life in which every citizen exists, and is this person with whom the judge must communicate directly.

The utility of this manual also demonstrates that the decision makers of the Judicial Branch are striving to provide clear and simple language so as to be effective, a goal that should be part of training. In addition, technical information units should engage in this exercise of language simplification and clarification, paying particular attention to modifying the drafting templates and standard forms that are in use.

The manual's objective is also to achieve better access to justice for citizens through the improved understanding of the pronouncements issued by the judges during the judicial process. The opportunity to reach this is given, as Law in the present century is improving communication elements on its own: the discourse, rhetoric and argumentation. This is reflected in the new trends of courses for students and lawyers, as well as in the good practices that many judges incorporate to their communication with the citizenry that they serve. .

CONTENTS

This manual includes the following contents:

I. Judicial Communication

- a. The right to understand as part of the due process
- b. Agents and purpose of legal communication

II. The Language in the Legal Documents

- a. Uses of language in documents for legal communication
- b. Use of grammar rules
- c. Drafting and motivation

III. Rules for a Clear and Simple Language

- a. Drafting judgments
- b. Drafting the rulings and decrees
- c. Drafting notification documents
- d. Drafting Minutes
- e. Developing the Summary
- f. Quotations

IV. Drafting and the New Legal Communication Forms

- a. The oral process
- b. Characteristics of the oral communication
- c. The jurisprudence technical information system